



Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

Tony Evers, Governor | Mary M. Kolar, Secretary

October 9, 2020

Dear Members, Friends, and Family:

Thank you all for the support and encouragement you are giving us as we all work hard to serve the members who live at our Wisconsin Veterans Homes. I would like to update you on a few things happening on our campuses in addition to providing information about COVID-19 cases.

We get a lot of questions about the no-visitors policy we enacted due to the threat of COVID-19. We agree with you that members need to have personal interaction with their loved ones. However, we had to weigh that with the risk of bringing a dangerous virus into our Home environment. We did much research and reviewed the guidance of public health experts and we have crafted a Safe Visits plan for each of our campuses. However, to allow visitors, we must not have any staff or members with COVID-19 in our facility for 14 days. Each campus will implement its plan as it meets this requirement. Once visitors are permissible at your Home, you will be notified about how to schedule your safe visit. In the meantime, you may continue to conduct window and virtual visits in a safe manner. Please continue to keep the windows closed, wear a mask and keep socially distanced while on campus. Virtual visits can be scheduled through the Life Enrichment Team at 715-720-6775.

We believe we have the best, most dedicated staff in long-term care. We see the care and dedication they have for serving our members every day. Unfortunately, some staff are contracting the virus. To help ensure we still provide a high level of care, we continue to recruit and hire additional staff and will be training our hospitality aides to become CNAs soon.

We are beginning to see people who tested positive for the coronavirus begin to recover. At Chippewa Falls, we had one member and three staff recover from COVID-19 in the last week. There is currently one member and one staff with the coronavirus.

Finally, you will begin to see some additional changes in the days to come. We are finding ways to operate more efficiently given all the new testing and other requirements we have due to COVID-19. First, we brought in automated kiosks for daily screening of staff (and visitors when the time comes). This will free up the staff who have been performing the screening to help elsewhere and it will make shift changes much smoother. We are also working on bringing in contracted staff to perform all staff testing. Due to the high rate of community spread, our staff are required to be tested more frequently than they were earlier this year. Again, this change will help us operate more efficiently and we are looking forward to the help.

I would like to close by sharing with you an article written by a Wisconsin combat veteran who served in Vietnam who is also a retired health care professional. To read online, go to www.WisVets.com and click on the article in the News section titled, "[Vern Larson: Help Protect Wisconsin Veterans from COVID-19.](#)" Please heed his words and do what you can to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Diane Lynch

Wisconsin Veterans Homes Division Administrator